

REMARKS

Claims 1 to 6, 8 to 22 and 24 are pending in the application, of which claims 1 and 13 are independent. Favorable reconsideration and further examination are requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1 to 6, 8 to 13, and 15 to 22 were rejected over U.S. Patent No. 6,188,307 (Katsuki) in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0089408 (Walsh); claim 14 was rejected over Katsuki and Walsh in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,188,307 (Smith); and claim 24 was rejected over Katsuki and Walsh in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0172259 (Bach).

As shown above, independent claims 1 and 13 specify that the housing has an upper side that completely covers the first electrical component and the second electrical component and that protects the first electrical component and the second electrical component from a contact voltage. The applied art is not understood to disclose or to suggest this feature of the claims.

As admitted on page 3 of the Office Action, Katsuki's insulating case 21 does not completely cover the first electrical component and the second electrical component. Walsh was cited to overcome this deficiency of Katsuki. In particular, the Office Action equates insulating layer 33 to a housing, and states that "it would have been obvious to combine the teachings of Katsuki and Walsh for the widely known benefit of protecting sensitive telecommunications equipment".¹ We respectfully disagree that it would have been obvious to combine Katsuki and Walsh in the manner proffered in the Office Action and, therefore, respectfully traverse the rejection over Katsuki and Walsh.

¹ Office Action, page 7

As shown in Figs. 5 and 7 of Katsuki (reproduced below), case 21 includes two cavities 21a and 21b.

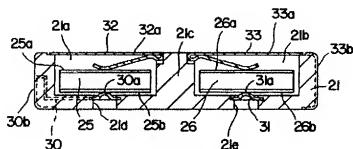


FIG. 5

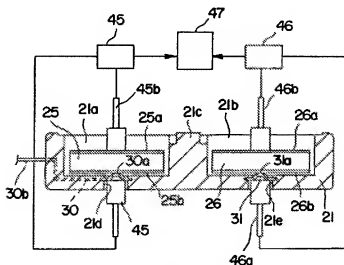


FIG. 7

Cavities 21a and 21b are formed so that they are externally accessible, and do not completely cover the components. The reason for forming the cavities relates to trimming and measuring trimming resistance, as is described in the following excerpt from column 6, lines 21 through 57:

The thermistor devices 25 and 26 are inserted horizontally into the cavities 21a and 21b of the case 21, as shown in FIG. 7. One measuring terminal 45a of a resistance measuring instrument 45 is inserted into a first hole 21d of the case 21 to touch a first protruding terminal 30. The other measuring terminal 45b is also inserted into a first cavity 21a to touch the first spring electrode 25a. In the same way, one measuring terminal 46a of a second resistance measuring instrument 46 touches a second protruding terminal 31 and the other measuring terminal 46b touches a second electrode 26a. Then the resistances of the thermistor devices 25 and 26 are measured at the same time to avoid adverse effects caused by a change in the ambient temperature on resistance measurement and a minute change by aging of the resistance measuring instruments 45 and 46. Therefore, the difference in resistance between the two thermistor devices 25 and 26 is accurately measured to conduct accurate trimming in a subsequent process.

The measured, accurate resistance data is sent to a calculation processing unit 47 and an electrode area to be removed from whichever has a lower resistance between the two thermistor devices 25 and 26 (in the second embodiment, the left thermistor device 25 as shown in FIG. 4) is calculated from the resistance difference between the two thermistor devices. Then, according to the electrode area to be removed, a drive signal is sent from the calculation processing unit 47 to a laser trimming unit 50. The laser trimming unit 50 emits a laser beam L to trim the thermistor device 25, which has a lower resistance. In other words, a part of the electrode 25a, which is exposed through the opening portion of the cavity 21a, is removed and the whole area of the electrode is reduced by the specified area. The thermistor device 25 in which part of the electrode 25a has been removed has a higher resistance than before, the higher resistance being substantially the same as that of the other thermistor device 26.

As described in column 6, line 63 to column 7, line 2,

Since trimming as well as measuring resistance is conducted in the condition in which the thermistor devices 25 and 26 are housed in the case 21, smooth assembling can be performed and changes in resistance of the thermistor devices 25 and 26 due to cracks or chips occurring when the devices are handled can be prevented. Furthermore, foreign matter is unlikely to enter the case 21 since laser trimming is used.

Thus, Katsuki describes benefits to having cavities 21a and 21b formed so that they do not completely cover the components (e.g., smooth assembly and prevention of cracks or chips). If Walsh's insulating layer/box 33 were substituted for case 21, it is believed that the foregoing assembly benefits described in Katsuki would not result (since Walsh's insulating layer/box would not provide access to the components in cavities 21a and 21b).

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is our opinion that it would not have been obvious to combine Katsuki and Walsh in the manner suggested in the Office Action. Claims 1 and 13 are therefore believed to be patentable over Katsuki and Walsh.

Each of the dependent claims is also believed to define patentable features of the invention. Each dependent claim partakes of the novelty of its corresponding independent claim and, as such, has not been discussed specifically herein.

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

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Page : 12 of 12

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